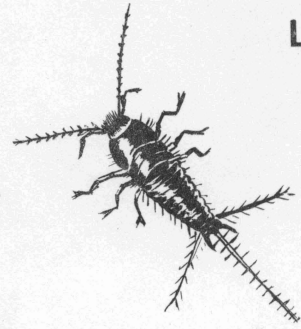


Silverfish

L-160

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Description, Life History and Habits

The silverfish is a slender, wingless, scale-covered insect, approximately one-half inch long when full grown. It is silver with three tail-like appendages at the hind end of the body and two long, slender feelers on the head. The young of this primitive insect resembles the adult except that it is smaller.

The female lays about a dozen eggs which hatch in six to 10 days under favorable conditions. Seven months to two years are required for the young to mature. Silverfish have been known to live over 300 days without food. Ability of the insect to live long periods without food may account for the large number found in buildings.

Silverfish are nocturnal, hiding during the daytime, and are often noticed when stored books or papers are moved suddenly. They thrive in damp, warm dark places. Increases of these insects in recent years are due probably to better built and better heated homes. Firebrats, sometimes mistaken for silverfish, are distinguished by dusky markings on their backs. They prefer to hide in warmer places, such as around furnaces and steam pipes in heated basements.

Control

Silverfish prefer vegetable foods with high starch or sugar contents, such as moist wheat flour. They feed upon book bindings, wallpaper, starchy insulation materials and may ruin starched clothing and lace curtains by feeding upon them. Thin fabrics, such as rayon, may have holes eaten in them by silverfish.

Five percent DDT or 2 percent chlordane household sprays will control silverfish. If dusts are preferred, use 5 percent DDT or chlordane. Thoroughness of application is important in controlling this pest. Apply the insecticide to surfaces over which silverfish crawl, especially around stored books or papers, in damp places as around bathroom fixtures and in attics where books or papers are stored. Furnace rooms or basements should be treated also. Do not use sprays around open flames.